



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

For Release: Immediate
Contact: Julie Henry (919)707-7053

Date: July 18, 2011

**N.C. Health, Agriculture Officials Warn of Dangers of Drinking Raw Milk
*FDA Investigates Eight Illnesses Linked to One Source***

RALEIGH - North Carolina health and agriculture officials say eight illnesses linked to raw milk consumption within the past month highlight the risks of drinking unpasteurized milk. The N.C. Division of Public Health and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services are working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate three confirmed and five probable cases of campylobacteriosis in Mecklenburg and Iredell counties. All of the affected individuals drank raw milk from the Tucker Adkins Dairy in York, S.C. One of the individuals affected by the Campylobacter outbreak was hospitalized.

"Because the milk was distributed in mid-June, we are hopeful that this is the extent of the outbreak," State Health Director Jeff Engel said. "However, we want to be sure that anyone who may have been exposed to milk from this source is aware of the signs and symptoms of illness and gets proper medical attention."

According to the FDA, raw milk is unpasteurized milk from hooved mammals, such as cows, sheep, or goats. Raw milk may contain a wide variety of harmful bacteria -- including *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157:H7, *Listeria*, *Campylobacter* and *Brucella* -- that may cause illness and possibly death. The most common symptoms of campylobacteriosis are vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, headache and body aches. The harmful bacteria in raw milk can be especially dangerous for pregnant women, the elderly, infants, young children and people with weakened immune systems.

"Food-borne illness is a serious health issue, so we are asking the public to help us identify anyone who may have received milk from the Tucker Adkins Dairy on or around June 14," Engel said. "The raw milk was distributed by courier to families that participated in a milk club and was packaged in one gallon containers. Our recommendation is to discard any milk or milk products that may have come from this source."

"The sale of raw milk for human consumption is illegal in North Carolina," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "Even though the purchase of raw milk is legal in South Carolina, transporting unpasteurized milk in final package form across any state lines to sell or distribute for human consumption is against the law."

Pasteurization, which involves heating food to a specific temperature for a definite length of time, and then cooling it immediately, slows microbial growth in food. It is a reliable method for eliminating harmful bacteria from milk, and is the only method used in the United States.

####

